



## **DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY**

### **1. ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 1.1 We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring that all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. All employees, sessional workers, consultants, volunteers, and students are protected by this policy.
- 1.2 With that in mind, bullying and harassment will generally be considered as acts of gross misconduct, and are likely to result in summary dismissal.
- 1.3 This policy covers harassment or bullying that occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on trips or at work-related events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff (including employees and sessional workers) and also by third parties including (but not limited to) consultants, volunteers, students, parents, suppliers or visitors to our premises.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time. It should be read in conjunction with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **2. HARMENY VALUES**

Our values underpin all that we do, and are particularly important in the context of promoting a culture of dignity at work. We expect all staff to actively promote and embed our values, and a positive working environment, within the organisation. You must set a good example to others (and the children), and report any issues to your line manager or HR.

### **3. WHAT IS HARASSMENT?**

- 3.1 Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.
- 3.2 It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.



- 3.3 Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 3.4 Harassment may include, for example:
- (a) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
  - (b) verbal abuse and derogatory remarks;
  - (c) teasing, jokes and 'banter' (see below);
  - (d) asking inappropriate questions about someone's private life;
  - (e) using incorrect pronouns, e.g. for transgender individuals; or
  - (f) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.
- 3.5 A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended target. For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.
- 3.6 Bear in mind that, just because a person seems to laugh along with any of the behaviours above, it does not mean that they welcome it. They could be frightened to make an issue of it or laugh along as a way of coping. Describing inappropriate behaviour as 'banter' will not prevent us from treating it as harassment, regardless of the response from anyone involved.

#### **4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

- 4.1 Sexual harassment is unlawful, and is not tolerated by Harmeny. This includes any act of sexual harassment by a third party outside of Harmeny.
- 4.2 Examples of sexual harassment may include:
- (a) unwanted physical conduct, including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
  - (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
  - (c) making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance;
  - (d) asking questions about someone's sex life;
  - (e) telling sexually offensive jokes;
  - (f) making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment;



- (g) displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content; or
  - (h) sexual assault or rape.
- 4.3 The law requires us to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. As with any other form of harassment, any act of sexual harassment will be treated as gross misconduct, which may result in summary dismissal.
- 4.4 We do not tolerate sexual harassment from third parties outside of Harmeny. If you are harassed by a third party, such as a contractor, a delivery person, a parent, or a social worker, you should report the incident immediately to your line manager or a member of the HR team. We will then take steps to address it, such as banning that individual from campus, raising a complaint with another employer/organisation, and/or contacting the police.
- 4.5 Aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, will be taken into account in deciding what disciplinary action to take.

## **5. WHAT IS BULLYING?**

- 5.1 Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.
- 5.2 Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:
- (a) physical or psychological threats;
  - (b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision/management;
  - (c) setting someone up to fail;
  - (d) excluding or ignoring others, or encouraging anyone else to do so;
  - (e) spreading rumours;
  - (f) undermining or being derogatory towards/about colleagues.
- 5.3 Legitimate, reasonable and constructive feedback related to a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to staff in the course of their employment or engagement, will not normally amount to bullying on their own.



## **6. SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 6.1 It is becoming increasingly common for bullying to take place online or on social media. Examples can be posting inappropriate or compromising photographs/videos, or discussing others in group texts.
- 6.2 As a general rule, if you wouldn't say it to a person's face, you shouldn't say it online or in a text message. It is also important to bear in mind that there is no privacy online or on social media, and that evidence (such as screen shots) can easily be obtained.
- 6.3 Bullying of this kind is just as serious, and will be addressed in as strict a manner as other forms.

## **7. IF YOU ARE BEING HARASSED OR BULLIED**

- 7.1 If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. If so, you should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to your line manager or the Head of HR, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.
- 7.2 If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you can raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure.
- 7.3 We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused will be disclosed only where necessary or appropriate. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation, such as mediation.
- 7.4 If we conclude that you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary and Performance Management Procedure. You will not normally be informed of the outcome of such a process.
- 7.5 If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a parent or other visitor (such as a social worker), we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.



## 8. PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE INVOLVED

8.1 Staff who make complaints or who participate in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary and Performance Management Procedure, up to and including summary dismissal.

8.2 Support and advice can always be sought from the HR Department. In addition, you can obtain free support from our Employee Assistance Programme, by calling 0800 882 4102.

## 9. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains in line with legislation and best practice. We will also obtain feedback from staff to monitor its effectiveness.

V#	Date	Summary
1	October 2020	Information on the school's approach to bullying and harassment.
2	August 2023	New branding. No substantive changes.
3	December 2024	Content added re sexual harassment, in line with new employer duty.